

SRI ISOPANISAD TEXT 11

*vidyam cavidyam ca yas
tad vedobhayam saha
avidyaya mrtyuh tirtva
vidyayamrtam asnute*

Translation

Only one who can learn the process of nescience and that of transcendental knowledge side by side can transcend the influence of repeated birth and death, and enjoy the full blessings of immortality.

Purport

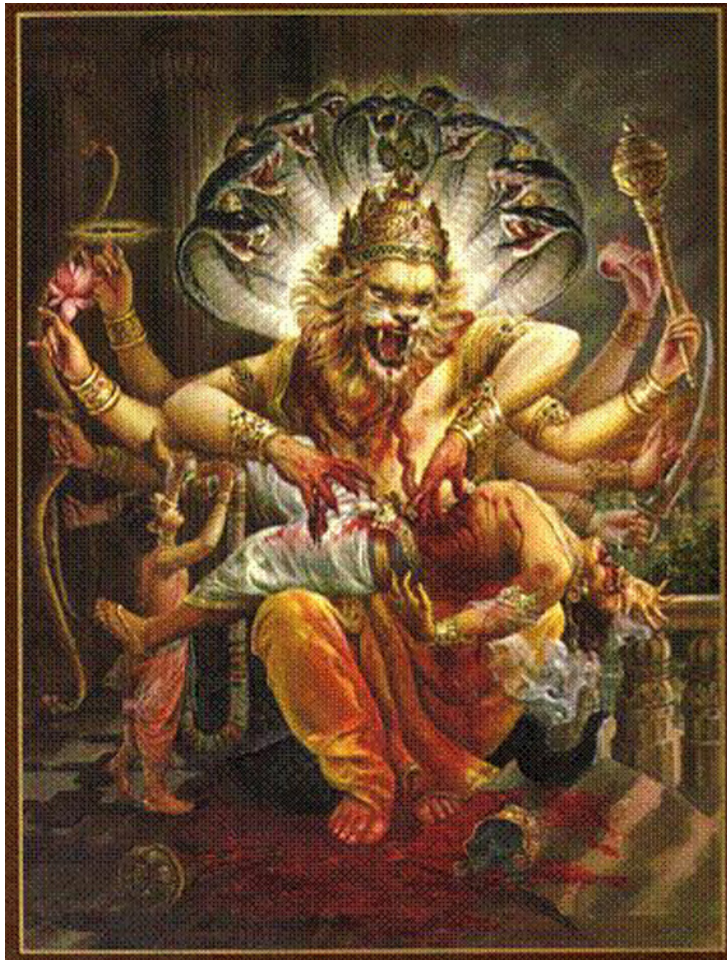
Since the start of the material world everyone is trying for a permanent life, but the law of Nature is so cruel that no one has avoided the hand of death. No one wants to die. That is a practical fact. Nor does anyone want to become old or diseased. But the law of Nature does not allow anyone immunity from death, old age or disease. The advancement of material knowledge has not solved these problems of life. Material science can discover the nuclear bomb to accelerate the process of death, but it cannot discover anything which can protect man from the cruel hands of death, disease and old age.

From the *Puranas* we learn of the activities of *Hiranyakasipu*: This king was materially very much advanced, and by his material acquisitions, by the strength of his nescience, he wanted to conquer death. He underwent a type of meditation so severe that all the planetary systems became disturbed by his mystic powers. He forced the creator of the universe, the demigod named Brahma, to come down to him, and then he asked him for the benediction of becoming an *amara*, one who does not die. Brahma refused to award this, however, because even he, the material creator, who has command over all the planets, is not himself an *amara*. He has a long duration of life, as is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gita*, but that does not mean that he doesn't have to die.

Hiranya means gold, and *kasipu* means soft bed. This gentleman was interested in these two things, money and women, and he wanted to enjoy this sort of life by becoming artificially immortal. He asked Brahma many things indirectly in hopes of fulfilling his desire to become an *amara*. He asked benediction that he might not be killed by any man, animal, god, or

any living being within the categories of the 8,400,000 species. He also asked that he might not die on the land, in the air, in the water or by any weapon whatsoever. So on and on, Hiranyakasipu thought foolishly that this would guarantee him against death. But in the end, although Brahma granted him all these benedictions, he was killed by the Personality of Godhead in the Form of a half-man, half-lion. And no weapon was used to kill him except the nails of the Lord. He was killed on the lap of the wonderful Living Being Who was beyond his conception.

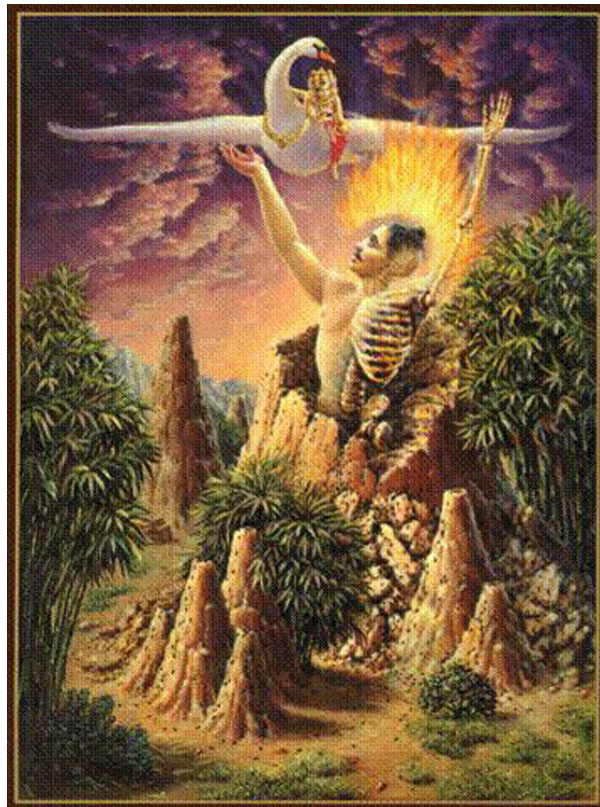
The whole point here is that even Hiranyakasipu, the most powerful of materialists, could not become deathless by his various plans. What, then, will be accomplished by the tiny Hiranyakasipus of today, who make plans which are throttled from moment to moment?



The demoniac King Hiranyakasipu wanted to be unconquerable and free from old age and dwindling of the body. He wanted to gain all the yogic perfections, to be deathless, and to be the only king of the entire universe, including Brahmaloaka. In the valley of Mandara Hill, Hiranyakasipu began performing his austerities by standing with his toes on the ground, keeping his arms upward and looking toward the sky. This position was extremely difficult, but he accepted it as a means to attain perfection. From the hair on Hiranyakasipu's head there emanated an effulgent light as brilliant and intolerable as the rays of the sun at the time of dissolution. Because of Hiranyakasipu's severe austerities, fire came from his head, and this fire and its smoke spread throughout the sky, encompassing the upper and lower planets, which all became extremely hot. Because of the power of his severe austerities, all the rivers and oceans were agitated, the surfaces of the globe, with its mountains and islands, began trembling, and the stars and planets fell. All directions were ablaze.



Lord Brahma, who is carried by a swan airplane, at first could not see where Hiranyakasipu was, for Hiranyakasipu's body was covered by an anthill and by grass and bamboo sticks. Because Hiranyakasipu had been there for a long time, the ants had devoured his skin, fat, flesh and blood. Then Lord Brahma spotted him, resembling a cloud-covered sun, heating all the world by his austerity. Struck with wonder, Lord Brahma smiled and then addressed him as follows: "O son of Kasyapa Muni, please get up! I have been very much astonished to see your endurance. In spite of being eaten and bitten by all kinds of worms and ants, you are keeping your life air circulating within your bones. Certainly this is wonderful. Who within these three worlds can sustain his life for one hundred celestial years without even drinking water? O best of the demons, I am now prepared to give you all benedictions, according to your desire." Lord Brahma, the original being of this universe, who is extremely powerful, then sprinkled transcendental, infallible, spiritual water from his waterpot upon Hiranyakasipu's body, which had been eaten away by ants and moths. Hiranyakasipu arose, endowed with a full body with limbs so strong that they could bear the striking of a thunderbolt. With physical strength and a bodily luster resembling molten gold, he emerged from the anthill a completely young man.



(Devi Bhagavata, 8th Skandha; Visnu Purana, Part 2, Chapter 6)

Naraka (Hell). There is a world called Pitrloka in the middle of the three worlds, on their southern side below the earth and above the Atala loka. The Agnisvattas and other pitrs stay there in meditative trance for securing prosperity to those who come to Pitrloka. Yama is the ruler of Pitrloka. Since he is scrupulous in imparting justice, Yama is also called Yamadharma. He administers justice with an even hand to all living beings brought there by his agents, according to their virtues and vices during their earthly lives. He has power to assess the virtues and vices of people and to assign suitable punishments to them, but not to alter the laws or methods of punishment. Sinners are sent to the different Narakas by Yamadharma according to the nature and seriousness of their sins. The Puranas refer to twenty-eight Narakas in all. They are:

(1) Tamisram. Those who rob others of their wealth, wives, children etc, are bound with ropes by Yama's servants and cast into the Naraka known as Tamisram. There, they are given sound beating until they faint. After they recover their senses, the beating is repeated and those who try to escape are bound hand and foot and pushed again into this hell. This is repeated as long as Fate has ordained.

(2) Andhatamisram. This hell is intended for the wife who takes food after deceiving the husband or the husband who takes food after deceiving his wife. The punishment here is the same as that of Tamisram except the beating. But the excruciating pain suffered by the victims on being tied fast with Yama's rope by his servants, makes them fall down senseless.

(3) Rauravam. This is the hell into which those who have persecuted other living beings are cast. Those who seize and enjoy another man's property or resources, also come under 'Persecution'. When such people are thrown into this hell, those whom they had persecuted or cheated while on earth, assume the shape of "ruru" and torment them severely. "Ruru" is a kind of dreadful serpent. This hell is known as "Rauravam" because of the abundance of rurus there.

(4) Mahauravam. Here also there are ruru serpents. Only they are of a fiercer type. Those who deny the legitimate heirs, their inheritance and

possess and enjoy other's property are squeezed to death by these terrible serpents coiling round them.

(5) Kumbhipakam. This is the hell for the punishment of those who kill and eat birds and animals. Here, oil is kept boiled in huge vessels. Yama's servants plunge sinners into this oil. The period of their torture extends to as many years as there were hairs on the bodies of the birds or animals which they killed and ate.

(6) Kalasutram (Yamasutra). This hell is terribly hot. It is here that those who do not respect their father, mother, elders, etc, are cast. They rush about in the unbearable heat of this hell and drop down exhausted, from time to time.

(7) Asi(ta) patram. This is the hell in which those sinners who abandon svadharma (one's own duty) and accept paradharma (other's duty) are flogged by Yama's servants with whips made of asipatra (sharp-edged sword-shaped leaves). When they run about under the flogging they trip over stones and thorns and fall on their faces. Then they are stabbed with knives made of asipatra. They drop down unconscious and when they recover their senses, the same process is repeated.

(8) Sukaramukham. Kings who neglect their duties and oppress their subjects by misrule, are punished in this hell. They are crushed to a pulp by beating until they fall down unconscious and when they recover, they are again subjected to the same treatment.

(9) Andhakupam. This is the hell for punishing those who oppress Brahmanas, gods and the poor. In this Kupa (well) there are wild beasts like tiger, bear etc. carnivorous birds like eagle, kite etc. venomous creatures like snakes and scorpions and insects like bugs, mosquitoes, etc. The sinners have to endure the constant attacks of these creatures, until the expiry of the period of their punishment.

(10) Krmibhohanam (Food for worms). Depraved Brahmanas who take their food without worshipping gods and honouring guests, are thrown into this "Krmibhojana" Naraka which is one lakh yojanas in extent. Worms, insects and serpents sting them and eat them up. Once their bodies are completely eaten up by these creatures, they are provided with new bodies, which are

also eaten up in the above manner. They have to continue there in this manner, till the end of their term of punishment.

(11) Taptamurti. Those who plunder or steal other people's gold, jewels, ornaments or money are cast into the furnaces of this Naraka, which is built of iron and always remains red hot with blazing fire.

(12) Salmali. This Naraka is intended for men and women who have committed adultery. A figure made of iron, heated red-hot is placed there. The victim is urged to embrace it. Yama's servants flog the victim from behind.

(13) Vajrakantakasali. This Naraka is for the punishment of those who have unnatural intercourse with cows and other animals. Here, the guilty people are made to embrace iron images full of diamond needles.

(14) Vaitarani. This is the Naraka for Kings who have violated all ordinances of Sastras and for adulterers. It is the most terrible place of punishment. Vaitarani is a river filled with human excreta, urine, blood, hair, bones, nails, flesh, fat and all kinds of dirty substances. There are various kinds of ferocious beasts in it. Those who are cast into it are attacked and mauled by these creatures from all sides. The sinners have to spend the term of their punishment, feeding upon the contents of this river.

(15) Puyodakam. This is a well, filled with excreta, urine, blood, phlegm etc. Brahmanas and others who have intercourse with women of low caste against customs, ordinances etc, vagabonds who wander about irresponsibly like animals and birds and other such sinners are cast into this Naraka.

(16) Pranarodham. This Naraka is for the punishment of Brahmanas who keep dogs, asses and other mean animals and constantly hunt and kill animals for food. Here the servants of Yama gather round the sinners and cut them limb by limb with their arrows and subject them to constant insult.

(17) Visasanam. This Naraka is for the torture of those who perform Yaga by killing cows to display their wealth and splendour. They will have to remain there during the whole term of their punishment under the constant flogging of Yama's servants.

(18) Lalabhaksam. This is the Naraka for lustful people. The lascivious fellow, who makes his wife swallow semen, is cast into this hell. Lalabhaksam is a sea of semen. The sinner lies in it feeding upon semen alone.

(19) Sarameyasanam. Those guilty of unsocial acts like incendiarism, poisoning food, mass slaughter, ruining the country, etc. are cast into the Naraka called Sarameyasana. There, nothing but the flesh of dogs is available for food. There are 700 dogs in that Naraka and all of them are as ferocious as leopards. They attack the sinners who come there from all sides and tear their flesh from their bodies with their teeth.

(20) Avici. This Naraka is for those guilty of bearing false witness, false swearing or assuming false names. They are hurled into Avici from a mountain which is 100 yojanas in height. The whole region of Avici is always shaken like an ocean with turbulent waves. As soon as the sinners fall into it they are utterly smashed into dust. They are again restored to life and the punishment is repeated.

(21) Ayahpanam. Those who belong to the first three castes - viz. Brahmanas, Ksatriyas and Vaisyas - who indulge in drinking Soma, Sura etc, are bound and thrown into this hell. They are forced to drink melted iron in liquid form.

(22) Ksharakardamam. Braggarts and those who insult people of noble birth are cast into this hell. Here, Yama's servants keep the sinners upside down and torture them in various ways.

(23) Raksobhaksam. This Naraka is for the punishment of meat-eaters. There are separate compartments in this hell for those who perform human sacrifice, eat human flesh or the flesh of other creatures. All the living beings they had killed before would have arrived here in advance. They would all join together in attacking, biting and mauling these sinners. Their shrieks and complaints would be of no avail there.

(24) Sulaprotam. People who take the life of others who have done no harm to them, by deceiving them or by treachery, with weapons like the trident, are thrown into the "Sulaprotam" hell. Yama's servants fix each of the sinners of the above class, on the top of a trident. They are forced to spend

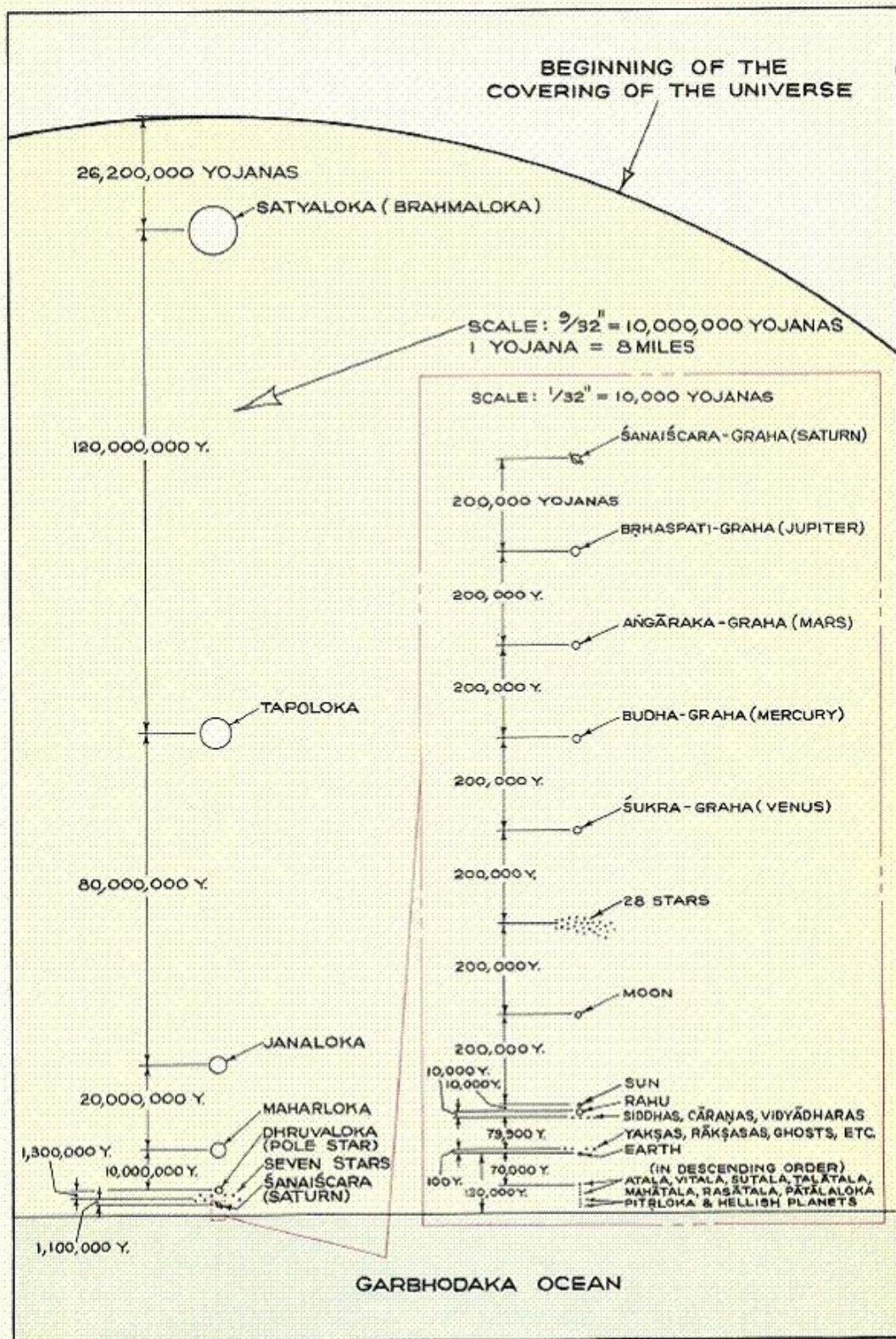
the whole term of their punishment in that position, suffering intense thirst and hunger, enduring all the tortures inflicted on them by Yama's servants.

(25) Dandasukam. Sinners who persecute fellow creatures like venomous serpents are cast into this Naraka. There are many wild beasts and many hooded serpents here. They eat alive, the sinners who fall into this hell.

(26) Vatarodham. This hell is for those who persecute the creatures living on mountain-peaks, dense forests, hollow trunks of trees, etc. It resembles mountains, eaves, forests etc. After throwing them into this hell the sinners are tortured with fire, snake, poison and weapons, just as they had tortured other creatures, while on earth.

(27) Paryavartanakam. One who denies food to a person who happens to come at meal-time and abuses him, is thrown into this Naraka. The moment he falls into it, his eyes are put out by being pierced with the beaks of cruel birds like the crow, eagle etc. It is the most painful experience for them.

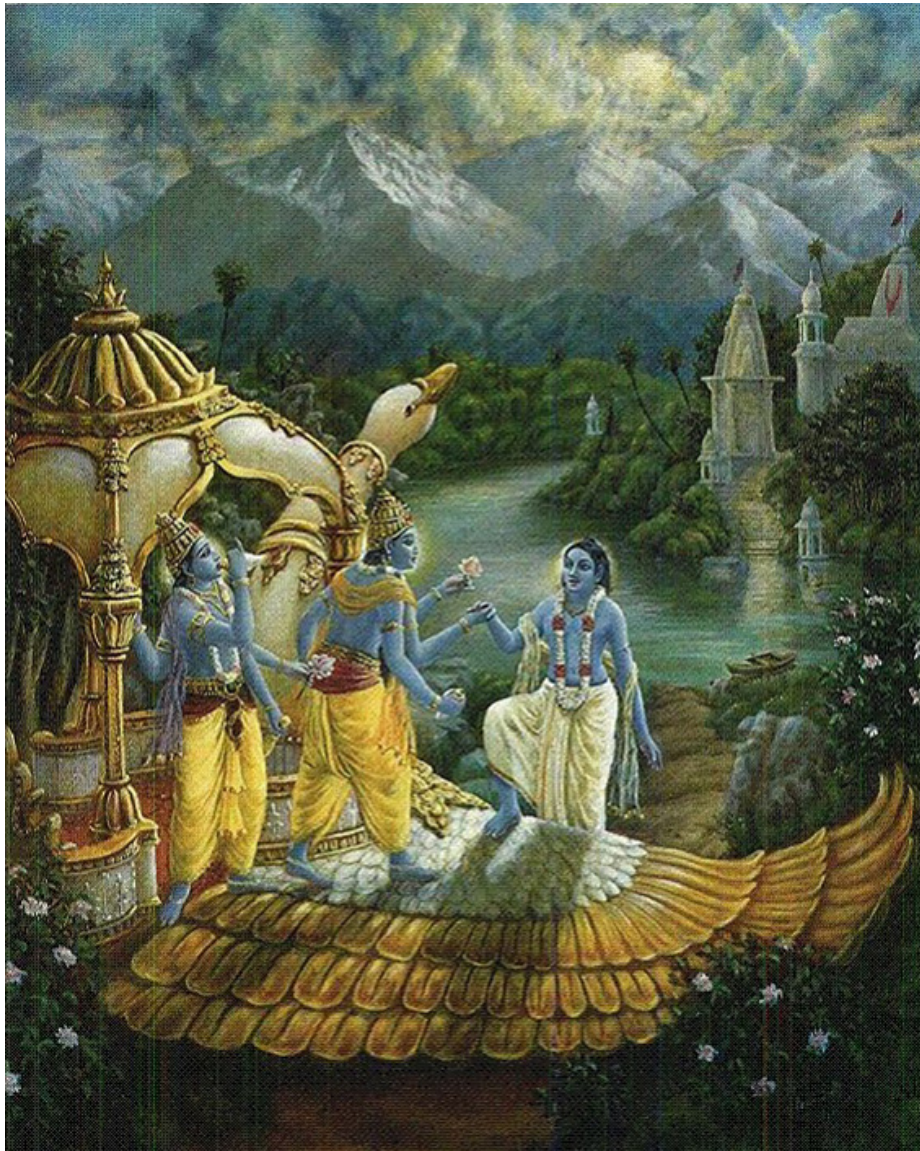
(28) Sucimukham. Proud and miserly people who refuse to spend money even for the bare necessities of life, find their place in this hell. Those who do not repay the money they have borrowed will also be cast into this hell. Here, their bodies will be continually pricked and pierced with needles.



The duration of the material universe is limited. It is manifested in cycles of *kalpas*. A *kalpa* is a day of Brahmā, and one day of Brahmā consists of a thousand cycles of four *yugas*, or ages: Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali. The cycle of Satya is characterized by virtue, wisdom and religion, there being practically no ignorance and vice, and the *yuga* lasts 1,728,000 years. In the Tretā-yuga vice is introduced, and this *yuga* lasts 1,296,000 years. In the Dvāpara-yuga there is an even greater decline in virtue and religion, vice increasing, and this *yuga* lasts 864,000 years. And finally in Kali-yuga (the *yuga* we have now been experiencing over the past 5,000 years) there is an abundance of strife, ignorance, irreligion and vice, true virtue being practically nonexistent, and this *yuga* lasts 432,000 years. In Kali-yuga vice increases to such a point that at the termination of the *yuga* the Supreme Lord Himself appears as the Kalki *avatāra*, vanquishes the demons, saves His devotees, and commences another Satya-yuga. Then the process is set rolling again. These four *yugas*, rotating a thousand times, comprise one day of Brahmā, and the same number comprise one night. Brahmā lives one hundred of such “years” and then dies. These “hundred years” by earth calculations total to 311 trillion and 40 billion earth years. By these calculations the life of Brahmā seems fantastic and interminable, but from the viewpoint of eternity it is as brief as a lightning flash. In the Causal Ocean there are innumerable Brahmās rising and disappearing like bubbles in the Atlantic. Brahmā and his creation are all part of the material universe, and therefore they are in constant flux.

In the material universe not even Brahmā is free from the process of birth, old age, disease and death. Brahmā, however, is directly engaged in the service of the Supreme Lord in the management of this universe—therefore he at once attains liberation. Elevated *san-nyāsīs* are promoted to Brahmā’s particular planet, Brahmaloka, which is the highest planet in the material universe and which survives all the heavenly planets in the upper strata of the planetary system, but in due course Brahmā and all the inhabitants of Brahmaloka are subject to death, according to the law of material nature.

"After regretting his past sinful activities, Ajamila freed himself from all material attraction and took shelter at a Visnu temple in Hardwar where he executed the process of *bhakti-yoga*. Thus he detached his mind from the process of sense gratification and became fully absorbed in thinking of the form of the Lord. When his intelligence and mind were fixed upon the form of the Lord, the *brahmana* Ajamila once again saw before him four celestial persons. Upon seeing the Visnudutas, Ajamila gave up his material body at Hardwar on the bank of the Ganges. He regained his original spiritual body, which was a body appropriate for an associate of the Lord. Accompanied by the order carriers of Lord Visnu, Ajamila boarded an airplane made of gold. Passing through the airways he went directly to the abode of Lord Visnu, the husband of the goddess of fortune."



Bhagavad-gita As It Is Chapter Sixteen Texts 1-3

TRANSLATION

The Blessed Lord said: Fearlessness, purification of one's existence, cultivation of spiritual knowledge, charity, self-control, performance of sacrifice, study of the Vedas, austerity and simplicity; nonviolence, truthfulness, freedom from anger; renunciation, tranquility, aversion to faultfinding, compassion and freedom from covetousness; gentleness, modesty and steady determination; vigor, forgiveness, fortitude, cleanliness, freedom from envy and the passion for honor – these transcendental qualities, O son of Bharata, belong to godly men endowed with divine nature.

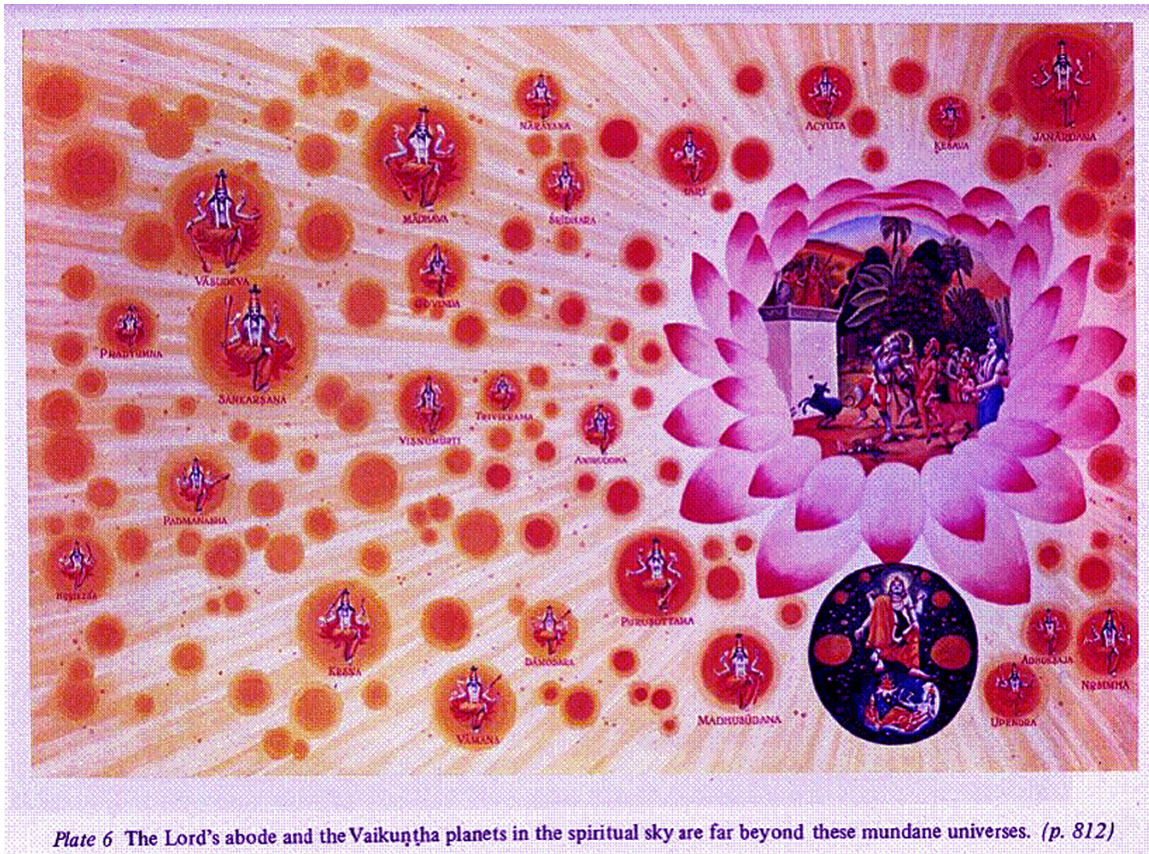


Plate 6 The Lord's abode and the Vaikunṭha planets in the spiritual sky are far beyond these mundane universes. (p. 812)